In the claims:

Claims 1-18 and 23 remain pending and under examination.

1. (original): A method for identifying minicell hosts bound to a binding partner comprising: (a) expressing a fusion protein in a minicell host comprising an outer membrane, wherein the fusion protein is encoded by a chimeric gene comprising: a DNA fragment encoding a first peptide which mediates attachment of the fusion protein to the outer membrane, and a DNA fragment encoding a second peptide; (b) contacting the minicell host of step (a) with a binding partner; and (c) identifying the minicell hosts bound to the binding partner.

2. (original): The method of claim 1 further comprising: (d) isolating the bound or unbound minicell host.

3. (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the DNA fragment that encodes the first peptide mediating attachment of the fusion protein to the outer membrane contains a signal amino acid sequence.

4. (original): The method of claim 3 wherein the signal sequence is selected from the group consisting of ompA signal sequence, ompT signal sequence, ompF signal sequence, traA signal sequence, phoA signal sequence, beta lactamase signal sequence, and the 17K antigen signal sequence from *Rickettsia rickettsii*.

5. (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the DNA fragment encoding the second peptide is from a DNA library.

6. (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the binding partner is selected from the group consisting of carbohydrates, sugars, nucleic acid molecules, peptides, proteins, metals, inorganic molecules and synthetic drugs.

7. (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the binding partner is selected from the group consisting of receptors, ligands, antibodies, vitamins, cofactors, enzymes, and neuromediators.

8. (previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein the minicell host is a gram negative bacteria.

9. (previously presented): The method of claim 7 wherein the gram negative bacteria is selected from the group consisting of *E. coli*, *Salmonella typhimurium*, *S. anatum*, *S. enteritidis*, *S. pullorum*, *S. senftenberg*, *S. worthington*, *Vibrio cholera*, *Erwinia amylovora*, and *Haemophilus influenzae*.

10. (previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein the minicell host is a gram positive bacteria.

11. (original): The method of claim 9 wherein the gram positive bacteria is *Bacillus subtilis*.

12. (previously presented): The method of claim 1 further comprising: (d) isolating DNA from the gene encoding the fusion protein; and (e) subjecting the isolated DNA to analysis methods selected from the group consisting of determination of DNA base composition, determination of DNA base sequence, determination of molecular weight, and determination of secondary structures within the sequence.

13. (previously presented): The method of claim 3, wherein the DNA fragment containing a signal amino acid sequence comprises the first 213 nucleotides of the open reading frame of the 17K antigen of *Rickettsia rickettsii*.

14. (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the expression of the fusion protein is controlled by an inducible promoter element.

15. (original): The method of claim 14 wherein the inducible promoter element is selected from a group consisting of lac, tac, and trp.

16. (original): The method of claim 1 further comprising: (d) cleaving the second peptide from the minicell host.

17. (original): The method of claim 2 further comprising: (e) cleaving the second peptide from the minicell host.

18. (original): The method of claim 17 further comprising: (f) isolating the peptide cleaved from the minicell host; and (g) subjecting the isolated peptide to methods selected from the group consisting of determination of amino acid composition, determination of amino acid sequence, determination of isoelectric point, and determination of molecular weight.

19 – 22 (cancelled)

23. (original): The method of claim 5, wherein the DNA fragment encoding the second peptide is at least three amino acids in length.